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26 May 1971

MEMORANDUM

SUBJECT : Testimony about Military CI Operations in the U. S.

Reference : Congressional Record - Senate

19 May 1971

"Ervin Hearings on Privacy, III - Testimony of
John O'Brien, Edward D. Sohler, and Lawrence
F. Lane"

1. O'Brien was honorably discharged from the army on 8 June 1970 with the rank of staff sergeant. Sohler was honorably discharged in August 1970 as a Specialist Fifth Class (E-5). Lane (although a full-time graduate student at George Washington University) was also discharged as a sergeant (E-5) in June 1970. (Unlike the other two, Lane does not state that he was honorably discharged.)

2. The reflective reader will be astonished at the remarkable verbal skill of these sergeants. True, Senator Ervin refers to their statements as "prepared". He does not say who prepared them. The phrasing and organization of each piece strongly suggests writing at the professional level. Consequently one wonders about the extent to which the views expressed are complete and undistorted. The style of the three pieces of "testimony" is decidedly uniform; all read like the work of one pen.

3. Here are quotations from each of the sergeants.

a. O'Brien: "My concern as to the legitimacy and necessity of my activities . . . began . . . when I witnessed the initiation of a file concerning

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Adlai Stevenson III.* I concluded that such activities posed a threat to every American's right to freedom of expression and to the system of government under which we have lived in the United States since the inception of the United States Constitution."

b. Sohler: "The intelligence establishment and program are too powerful and too special to be left to their own devices. This can be seen in the way they have conducted themselves, essentially without supervision, over the past several years. In my estimation, some kind of civilian intelligence review board is needed, to watch over all the intelligence agencies in the U.S. government, including those within and without the military. This could prevent the kind of incursions into the civilian sector by the military we have witnessed, and would serve to make more efficient the intelligence operations that are necessary by eliminating duplication of efforts."

c. Lane: "These hearings will point out to the military the folly of maintaining a domestic intelligence operation using untrained personnel, unsubstantiated information and ill-suited regulations to assist in civil disturbance missions. Furthermore, I am hopeful that these hearings will point out to all Americans the serious dangers of compromising our Constitutional rights in the name of false security. Covert intelligence operations, military or civilian, must cease if the Constitution is to be upheld."

4. Mr. Lane testified that he is currently employed on the legislative staff of Congressman Robert N. Giaimo of

* It would be interesting to know how a witness giving testimony pronounces a Roman III.

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Connecticut. It would be interesting to know if either O'Brien or Sohler is also employed by a congressman or congressional committee. Mr. Lane is cited in the Washington Daily News of 24 May 1971 as having provided recent information about a "second spy network" operated by the Continental Army Command at Fort Monroe, Va., without the knowledge of the Pentagon.

5. The material inserted into the Congressional Record makes no explicit reference to CIA. But the references in the quoted remarks to "intelligence agencies . . . within and without the military" and to "covert intelligence operations, military or civilian" suggest that Senator Ervin may try to lug the Agency into the furor at a future time.

Attachment a/s

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